

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Abbatron LLC

Northwest Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center

Abbatron LLC Achieves Reduction in Setup Time

Client Profile:

Abbatron LLC manufactures electronic and electrical connectors, wire harnesses, fiber connectors, and other components for the low-mid voltage industry. The company employs 45 people at its facility in Meadville, Pennsylvania.

Situation:

Abbatron's sales history had been steady, but their move to a new facility made it clear that setup times on their CNC and screw machines (part of their 1836 binding post production process) were adding significantly to their operating costs, taking approximately 7 hours. It was also clear that the company needed help with workplace organization. Already on a Lean journey, Abbatron had taken Cellular Flow and Value Stream Mapping courses and had implemented them on the shop floor. They turned to the Northwest Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center (NWIRC), a NIST MEP affiliate, for help with setup time reduction and workplace organization.

Solution:

NWIRC brought in Megan Burns of Operations Strategy Consulting to provide a kickoff session which included an overview training session on Single Minute Exchange of Dies (SMED). Burns then spent one day on-site to observe and collect data on the actual setup, to establish a baseline. The company then analyzed the setup activities and generated an initial list of recommendations. Weekly second work sessions were held to further identify sources of waste and how to minimize or eliminate them. A new, streamlined process was developed and piloted, and provision was made for comparison setup to observe and measure the team's progress. A goal was established for a 50 percent reduction in combined setup time. The 5S (Sort, Set in Order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain)/Workplace Organization program began with a training session for Abbatron team members. Following this session, Operations Strategy worked with the Abbatron team to identify and prioritize sections of the plant for the 5S implementation. Weekly work sessions were then held with team members to work through the five phases. Once completed, the principles developed were written up as standard procedures.

Results:

- * Projected cost savings of \$18,000.
- * Reduced setup time for screw machine by 78.5 percent.
- * Reduced setup time for CNC machine by 69.4 percent.
- * Reduced scrapped parts by 89 percent.

Testimonial:

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"NWIRC's help in our using Operations Strategy Consulting led to a successful project in which our employees learned many Lean principles, and how and why to put them into practice."

Skip Simmons, President